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From: EPA Press Office
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THE WASHINGTON POST

New York Times Guilty of Large Screw-Up on Climate-Change Story

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https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/erik-wemple/wp/2017/08/09/new-york-times-guilty-of-large-screw-up-on-climate-change-story/?utm_term=.209c6c2d9486

The New York Times on Wednesday appended a correction to a story about a climate change study:

Correction: August 9, 2017

An article on Tuesday about a sweeping federal climate change report referred incorrectly to the availability of the report. While it was not widely publicized, the report was uploaded by the nonprofit Internet Archive in January; it was not first made public by The New York Times.

That correction, which sits at the foot of the story, dutifully straightens out the record. Yet given the magnitude of the screw-up, it should sit atop the story, surrounded by red flashing lights and perhaps an audio track to instruct readers: Warning: This story once peddled a faulty and damaging premise.

That premise suggests that the Trump administration is stifling a damaging draft report — part of the congressionally mandated National Climate Assessment — with dire warnings about climate change. “The average temperature in the United States has risen rapidly and drastically since 1980, and recent decades have been the warmest of the past 1,500 years, according to a sweeping federal climate change report awaiting approval by the Trump administration,” noted the lead of the article, which was written by Lisa Friedman.

As it detailed the conclusions of the draft report, the New York Times highlighted an equally scary prospect: That without the intervention of the New York Times, it might not have seen the light of day. Examples:

- “One government scientist who worked on the report, and who spoke to The Times on the condition of anonymity, said he and others are concerned it will be suppressed.”
- “A copy of it was obtained by The New York Times.”
- “The draft report by scientists from 13 federal agencies, which has not yet been made public, concludes that Americans are feeling the effects of climate change right now.”

As part of its corrective effort, the New York Times has pulled the language saying that “a copy of it

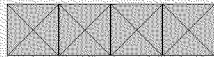
was obtained by the New York Times,” as well as the mistaken assertion that it has “not yet been made public.” Even so, the article continues to carry this line: “Another scientist involved in the process, who spoke to The New York Times on the condition of anonymity, said he and others were concerned that it would be suppressed.” As well as this one: “Scientists say they fear that the Trump administration could change or suppress the report.”

Though it may be the case that certain scientists maintain such fears, that’s a pretty tough position in light of the fact that the report “was uploaded by the nonprofit Internet Archive in January” and publicized by the New York Times in August.

It is unclear how such a mistake came about. Maybe reporter Lisa Friedman failed to consult one Bob Kopp, or others who cited the error on Twitter:

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